



MAY 2024

Trinity Chimes

Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ • Frederick, Maryland USA

We, the members of this congregation, seek to celebrate in word and deed the gospel of Jesus Christ, by nurturing spiritual growth through worship, study, and prayer; by caring for one another as God cares for us; and by proclaiming God's love for all people as we work to help our neighbors near and far. We commit ourselves to develop and implement specific programs to fulfill our mission.

From the Pastor's Desk on Earth Month 2024

Friends, because I've had very busy pre-Easter and post-Easter weeks, I've decided to respond to Earth Month 2024 by sharing with you two original, nature-related poems that I wrote while serving a UCC congregation in Sedona, AZ. Both poems were inspired by the view from the patio of the apartment I occupied near Sedona.

~ Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan, Interim Senior Pastor

THE TENACITY OF A LEAF

I know that I shall never reap,
A thing tenacious as a leaf.
Tree limbs are limited by their count,
But a leaf will sprout wherever buds mount.
One year a thousand and the next year two,
Yielding cool shade with so much ado.
In Fall they wither and are blown to the ground,
Where they feed the soil for a Spring rebound.
I've tried to count them and each time I've failed,
Because leaves, for each other, provide a veil.
One feeds a worm, and another shelters a bee,
While others are savored in a hot cup of tea.
Whenever fire comes and scorches the earth,
Seeds fall to the ground, perched for new birth.
When others have forgotten DNA they cannot see,
A new sprout springs forth, cradled by a leaf.



A TREE ON THE GOLF COURSE

There's a tree on the golf course, not far from the 9th Green.
It's one of the loveliest trees my eyes have ever seen.
Standing tall and majestic, I don't know its type or name.
The other trees nearby just don't appear the same.
It stands in a place that's been claimed for years, and years.
When I focus my eyes upon it, I'm nearly moved to tears.
Golf balls have struck its branches doing little if any harm, while
the tree with steadfast purpose, reveals God's divine charm.

MAY WORSHIP NOTES

(Scripture notes from Season of the Spirit)

MAY 12 – SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 | John 17:6-19

Jesus prays for the disciples that they be one, unified with God in Christ and with each other. He prays that they will have joy, for their unity, and that God will protect them as he sends them into an unwelcoming world. Recorded during the late first century, the prayer reinforced the relationship between the disciples, Jesus, and God. God has chosen them; they are worthy and not abandoned.

Today, we will ordain and install the newly elected elders, deacons, and committee chairs. Spirit will be sharing in music leadership this morning.

MAY 19 – PENTECOST SUNDAY

Acts 2:1-21 | John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

On Pentecost Sunday, Christians worldwide celebrate the formation of the church when the Holy Spirit called people into community as Christ's body and blessed them with universal understanding of languages. Pentecost, which literally means "fifty days," is a moveable feast that always occurs on the seventh Sunday after Easter. Though it may not be as ubiquitous as other key Christian celebrations, it is a tremendous day in church history. Some theologians describe Pentecost as the Church's birthday. Others describe it as a "big bang" that brought the Church into being, for just as God's Spirit came rushing into the world over the waters of creation, in Acts 2, God's Spirit rushes into the world to gather and transform God's people.

So where does that leave us? If we are willing to be amazed, Pentecost is one of the most awe-inspiring days in our Christian calendar. If we are willing to be transformed, it is an opportunity to be renewed in energy and faithfulness toward the work of God's kingdom on earth when all people will experience true liberation and boundless love.

The Senior Choir will sing. We will receive the Strengthen Our Church Offering today and welcome Nikao Washington through the Sacrament of Baptism. Nikao is the child of Karly Johnson and Chase Washington, the grandchild of Dwayne and Kathy Johnson, and the great-grandson of Patti Patterson.



Pentecost Sunday 2023

MAY 26 – TRINITY SUNDAY

Isaiah 6:1-8 | Romans 8:12-17 | John 3:1-17

On this Sunday, when the church invites us to celebrate our most foundational and confounding doctrine, the scriptures demonstrate the three persons of the Trinity (Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer) working together to call, equip, and send out God's people. To be effective in leading where we are called, we must lean into God's mystery and power. Our world likes easy answers and superficial sound bites. However, the call to follow Jesus is one that brings us into something deeper and more difficult. This challenge is one that is not to be taken lightly. However, it offers us a greater adventure and a more meaningful life. It is up to us, though, to accept the healing coal that God offers us or seek to stay cowering in our unworthiness.

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads will be preaching. The Senior Choir will sing. We will honor and celebrate graduates.

Let's Study the Bible ~ Sunday Morning

with The Revs. John and Rebecca Shillingburg

Sundays North Room / Zoom 9:00 – 10:15 AM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERSunstudy

Meeting ID: 893 8670 5888 Passcode: 327128

In May we will be skipping lightly through the Psalms and the Wisdom literature: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. No prior experience needed; just bring your Bible!

Tuesday Morning Bible Study ~

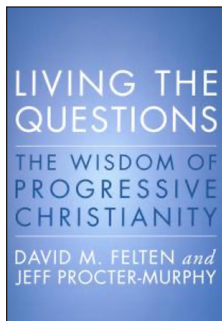
with Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

Tuesdays

North Room / Zoom 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Zoom: bit.ly/3TdUnOy

Meeting ID: 875 1423 3398 Passcode: 973365



Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity

Revs. David Felten and Jeff Procter-Murphy, along with an all-star cast of Bible scholars and top church teachers, provide a primer to a church movement that encourages every Christian to “live the questions” instead of “forcing the

answers.” We will supplement our reading with the DVD course of the same name, *Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity*, which includes commentary from such bestselling authors as Diana Butler Bass, John Shelby Spong, Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, Brian McLaren, and others.



Let's Study the Bible ~ Wednesday Evening

with The Rev. John Shillingburg

Wednesdays North Room / Zoom 7:00 PM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERwedstudy

Meeting ID: 892 1764 4500 Passcode: 848933

Like the Sunday morning class, this evening class offers an opportunity to read and discuss the scriptures, looking at them in their original context, considering when and by whom they were written, and how they have been interpreted through the centuries. All you need is a Bible; no prior knowledge is necessary. In May, we will study the story of Exodus, one of the two central stories in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament).

Germany Update!

Our German friends will be here before we know it! We have host families for all our guests. Special thanks to Renae Kline, who organized this, and all the families welcoming youth and leaders into your homes. We are especially glad they can join us for the Church Picnic on June 30!

We also turned in our list of Washington, DC trip attendees for July 5. We pray for no trouble with our German friends getting their names added through the embassy.

We can still have people join us for the trip to Bethany Beach! This will be Tuesday, June 25-Saturday, June 29. Email Pastor Kirstin ASAP to be a part of this trip! Chaperones will be Pastor Kirstin, Laura Baker, and Beth Bowen. Since it is an overnight trip, this activity is for youth completing 6th grade, adults who have gotten a background check and reviewed and agreed to our safe church policies since December 2022, and children of chaperones.

We also need help preparing some meals at church. These days include the first day they arrive (June 23), the Fourth of July cookout and ice cream, and a goodbye meal the day they leave for the airport (July 6), among others. Please reach out to Starr Schaeberle, who has agreed to coordinate!

starr.schaeberle@comcast.net

In May, we'll present other options to meet and share in experiences while we are hosting these friends in Christ!

Wandering Heart

A Recap

Thank you to all who participated in responding to the questions on the fish as part of your Lenten devotion. We had nearly 500 fish in response to four questions—quite the catch. I had the privilege of reading through the responses as I emptied the boat and would like to share a general sense of the congregational feeling with you.

Of course, every *“beginning of your faith story”* was highly personal, but many people mentioned parents and grandparents who prioritized attending church. Sunday school, church camp, choir, receiving a Bible, and saying grace around the table as jump-starts or foundations of their faith. Other experiences, such as serving as a soldier in a war zone, observing faith practices and talking with citizens of a Muslim country, being visited by Christian missionaries, being a recovering alcoholic, and surviving childhood abuse, moved others to a closer relationship with God.

Major life events like births, deaths, and illnesses were mentioned in response to the question, *“When in your life have you felt closest to God?”* Being in nature—at the ocean, in the mountains, working in the garden, walking the dog, seeing a rainbow deepened the awareness of God’s abundance. Music was a glorifying moment. Being in community—teaching, worshipping, helping others and being helped by others, getting a hug, and being surrounded by a welcoming, loving, and affirming family of faith—fostered a feeling of closeness.

On Palm Sunday, the question was, *“Palm Sunday is a holy parade, a peaceful protest. What cause would you march for?”* Not surprisingly, with so much of the world in turmoil, peace and an end to war and violence—in Gaza, in Israel, in Ukraine, in Haiti and throughout the world was a frequent response. Issues of equity,

justice, and access to life-sustaining resources for all covered a category of responses that included women’s reproductive rights, LGBTQIA rights, Black Lives Matter, democracy, the unhoused, mental health issues, Alzheimer’s, cancer, children’s advocacy, the earth, and an end to gun violence. Folks prayed for peace and freedom across the world.

Ending positively, the last question was, *“What gives you hope?”* The overwhelming response was that we find hope in our family, friends, and the ERUCC church community, especially our church staff, pastor, and youth. We look to them for kindness, love, laughter and inspiration. We glory in the sunrise, the sound of the birds, the flowers in our gardens. We are grateful for medical advancements and for people who are courageous and caring when speaking up for others. We relax in the love of the Lord.

Bless all who made this Lenten and Easter season richer for us all.

~ Ave Barr



Dr. Morgan, Ave Barr, Pat Condo, Betsy Selby, and Kim Sexton.

ERUCC Helps Get Out the Vote for the Virginia Primary

We are pleased to share that we have successfully met our GOTV postcarding commitment for the primary season! With the help of many, we addressed and are mailing over 1,000 postcards to voters in Northern Virginia who historically do not vote and are underrepresented.

We had three postcarding events and many worked at home on this important effort. We are grateful for those who invested their time, including Ave Barr, Peter Brehm, Robin Cooney, Linda Coyle, Cathie Duncan, Kathy Gourlie, Kathleen Jefferson, Susan Kulp, Nancy Manthey, Sedonia Martin, Heather and Alan McCarthy, Kate McDermott, Thomasa Pomeroy, Sharon Reith, Carolyn Roberts, Starr Schaeberle, John and Rebecca Shillingburg, Peg Stahler, Kathleen Stolz, Shelley Weakley, and Tyler L. York.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Calling: Thank you to Sue Pinner, who has agreed to do reminder calls to our ERUCC membership to vote in our local primary!

General Election GOTV Postcarding: We will launch this as soon as we hear that the Center for Common Ground is ready to provide addresses.

Let us know if you want to help and, if you know, how many postcards you are willing to write. This will help us gauge how many addresses to order from the Center for Common Ground.

~ Kathleen Jefferson and Rebecca Shillingburg



Starr Schaeberle, Sedonia Martin, Kathleen Jefferson and Peter Brehm gather to write postcards to voters in Northern Virginia.

GOD WILL PROVIDE

By Jenni Caughy

My mother has given me a lot of advice since my young adult years. And I mean, A LOT. She's a full-blooded Italian with SO much to say. (Much like our son, Laszlo. Yes, God does have a sense of humor.) Most of my mother's advice was not as welcomed as it should have been. I know that, now that I'm a mother. However, one thing she told me I often repeat to myself is, "*God will provide.*" I must admit I needed to see it to believe it. And, of course, God showed me.

Leandra and I have been in the depths of infertility for the past three years. It's been all-consuming in every way – especially the financial aspect. It has cost us over \$38,000, with a recent loss at eight weeks being the farthest we've gotten in growing our family. During this time, Leandra cut back to part-time at her job and got a second job at Starbucks for the health benefits to cover IVF. In doing so, she also cut her income in half.



I was hesitant to give regularly to the church, since we were in such need. But those three words, "*God will provide,*" came to mind each month and gave me the peace I needed to let go. A year later, Leandra was offered a full-time, high-paying position close to home, and I received a salary increase at my job. Last month, Leandra's uncle gave us a significant monetary gift to allow us to continue with treatment. God did provide – more than we ever expected. And once again, God proved my mother to be right.

Giving to the church is a discipline. It's a decision to put the needs of others before your own. It's an act of trust in our sovereign God to care for us in ways we may never understand. Leandra and I might not have our second child yet, but we've been blessed in countless other ways. How could we not give back to such a God!

ERUCC Signs Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake Partner Congregation Pledge

As people of faith, we are called to be in community. In our journeys with our faith practice—whatever that may be—we are not alone. Whether it is prayer, worship, community service, or other reflection, we are called to do it with others. We are stronger together. In response to our call to be caretakers of Creation, we aren't alone either. We are creating a movement of faith communities coming together to heal the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed, and we are honored you are part of it.

Let us come together to engage members of our own community—building Green Teams, educating, and bringing about positive change in our own congregations. Our call to community is not limited to this. We must also look outwardly—making connections to the broader community and the world. Knowing that we all live on the same planet means we are intricately connected to one another—not just to other members of our chosen faith communities.

This is where your work with us here at IPC comes in. The movement we are creating—the One Water Partnership—is a response to a calling of community.

We commit ourselves to engaging members of our community, both within and outside of our congregations, working together to protect and restore our shared watershed, preserving it for generations to come. Creator, help us advocate for all Creation, build connections with the broader world, and remember that we are called to care for our neighbors. Dear Creator, be with us as we engage and ignite our own faith communities, and those beyond our congregation, all to honor the blessed gift of water, the sustainer of life.



**Interfaith
Partners for the
CHESAPEAKE**

YOUTH RETREAT

The Youth Retreat was again at Bethany Beach during FCPS Spring Break. We approached some of our play and our devotions around the theme of waves. This included racing rubber ducks in a large water puddle, participating in a photo scavenger hunt on the boardwalk that included waving with arms and ocean waves, creating images around scripture passages that present waves, considering spiritual metaphors of “Making Waves” and “Catching a Wave” as well as ripples and currents, and discussing the impact of what we “pass on” to others whether intentionally or unintentionally. May the ocean now invite you to feel closer to God in more ways, and may you greet people with creative “waves” and inviting conversations. We also enjoyed a game of mini-golf, ice cream on the boardwalk, and many rounds of ping pong!



Three cheers for Quynn’s competitive spirit and mighty wind blowing the rubber ducks and creative PBJ making for the scavenger hunt win, Peyton’s formidable determination to learn ping-pong and see a sunset, Eli’s love of strategic games and willingness to teach ping-pong and cook us lunch, and Kali’s calm presence and love of simple foods to whom we sang Happy Birthday the most! Here’s to Joe’s culinary planning, creative gaming, and incredible drawing skills of the hammock and to Laura’s infectious enthusiasm, love of the beach, and weather reporting skills.

Thank you to all of our congregation for generous contributions of food and prayers! Thanks to parents Joe Adkins, Laura Baker and Beth Bowen for helping with all of the details.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

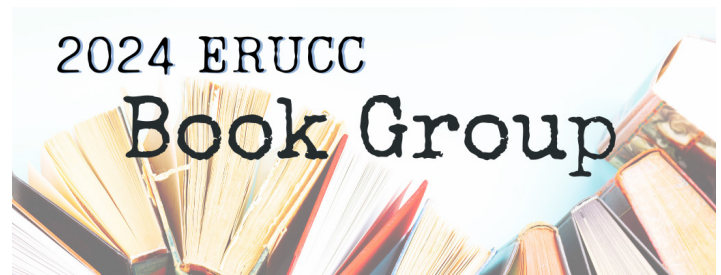
Specific birthdates will not be published for privacy.
If you would like to see a certain month's birthdays,
please contact the church office.

Laura Baker • Tom Coffey • Robin Cooney
Beanie Cornell • Joey Cross • Basil Davis
Nancy Doll • Evie Frazier • Andy Fromknecht
James Graham • Sara Hoewing
Colleen Huetting • James Huetting • Tom Huetting
Kim Jahoda • Kathy Johnson • Robert Marsh
Laura McNay • Karin Mens • Matthew Mercier
Cameron Pain • Harry Pomeroy
Mary Ellen Rhoderick • Jennie Russell
Alex Schaeberle • Catie Schaeberle • Mike Sexton
Rebecca Shillingburg • Donna Smith
Delmar Speak • Sandra Trout • Glenn Wallace
Ashar Wenner • Fred Wenner • Bob Ziegler

YOUNG ADULTS

Our young adults have begun to get together more frequently. They've asked for support with creating an activity pack that they can take with them to Baker Park or someone's backyard. Currently, they have a couple of disks, a spike ball set, and a couple of waterproof blankets. As we continue to appreciate their gifts in our community and desire for connection outside of Sunday morning, we want to help by providing more for this activity pack. Items like a foldable wagon and other yard games allow for slow activity and great conversations! If interested, you can purchase an item from the list and bring it to the church office! You can email Kirstin or bring a donation to the office towards these items. Amazon gift cards would also allow the group to purchase board games!

bit.ly/4aNDn9Y



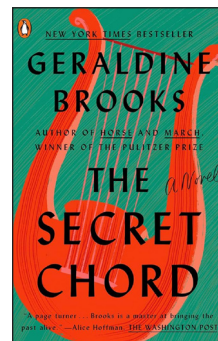
2024 Book Group Coordinators:

Susan Kulp and Rebecca Shillingburg

North Room / Zoom: bit.ly/ERUCCbooks

Meeting ID: 848 7056 7574 Passcode: 226669

The ERUCC Book group meets at 7 PM on the fourth Tuesday of every other month in the North Room or virtually.



May 28

The Secret Cord by Geraldine Brooks

The Secret Chord provides a new context for some of the best-known episodes of David's life while also focusing on others that have been neglected—that are even more remarkable and emotionally intense. We see David through the eyes of those who love him or fear him—from the prophet Natan, the voice of

his conscience, to his wives Mikal, Avigail, and Batsheva, and finally to Solomon, the late-born son who redeems his Lear-like old age. Brooks has an uncanny ability to hear and transform characters from history, and this beautifully written, unvarnished saga of faith, desire, family, ambition, betrayal, and power will enthrall her many fans.

Upcoming:

July 23

Anxious People: A Novel by Fredrik Backman

September 24

The Night Watchman by Louise Erdrich

November 26

The Woman They Could Not Silence by Kate Moore

People's Prayers
for Peace



This is an open invitation to anyone who feels called to offer a prayer to end violence in any manifestation, and to bring about peace. General Minister and President, the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson calls the church to a season of prayer. For more information:

<https://www.ucc.org/peoples-prayers-for-peace/>



GREEN TEAM NEWS

Spring is springing! Birds are singing! New life is everywhere! What a joyful time of the year! Join us for these planting opportunities to help our human community AND the wild community of native insects and birds.

Green Team Volunteer Opportunities!

FREDERICK FOOD SECURITY NETWORK GARDEN

Friday, May 3 • 10 AM - 12 PM

Beyond Shelter site

27 Degrange St. Frederick MD

The Frederick Food Security Network Gardens is supported by the Coastal Studies program at Hood College. They have a new, energetic director named Haroun Hallack, and he needs some help to get this garden planted. The produce will be donated to the Community Frig at the Frederick Center.



ERUCC NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

Saturday, May 11 • 9-11 AM

ERUCC parking lot area

Join us in planting new native plants, weeding, and spreading mulch. We need all the help we can get! Bring gloves, water bottles, and whatever garden tools you have. Native plants provide food and shelter for many kinds of insects, birds, and wildlife. Help us create a more sustainable habitat in downtown Frederick!

STAY TUNED! NATIVE PLANT WISH LIST COMING SOON!

RSVP and Questions to Linda Coyle lcoyle@yahoo.com



Participants at the Green Team Networking Event in April were led by Joelle Novey in a Passover song adapted for climate change and the keynote presenter, Tiara Lester from Frederick County Division of Energy and the Environment, shared information about the Power Saver Retrofits program, which provides resources to conserve energy and lower energy bills at no cost for low- to moderate-income households.



ERUCC recycled 3.25 lbs. of candy wrappers, gum wrappers, snack and chip bags, and granola bar wrappers through the Trash or Treasure recycling box in the upper lobby in February, March, and early April. Putting your wrappers in the candy wrapper recycling box helped keep our planet clean and contributed to the circular economy. Thank you for helping to make a sweet and sustainable choice!

CELEBRATING OUR SENIORS AND GRADUATES!

We will soon be celebrating the high school graduations of Liam Cumber (Governor Thomas Johnson High School) and Jared Hueting (Poolesville High School), the college graduation of Ben Mercier (Indiana University Bloomington), the law school graduation of Maria Lagrotteria (American University Washington College of Law), and the doctorate graduation of Maddie Martin (Penn State College of Medicine)!

Join us in worship on Sunday, May 26, to honor and pray for them.

We also invite you to help celebrate our graduates by writing a card or note to say congratulations and share any special thoughts or memories that you have of these students. Drop the cards or notes in the labeled bags in the sanctuary lobby.

Please contact the church office if you or your child is graduating so that we can include everyone.



Sunday Morning Schedule

8:30 – 9:15 AM	Early Worship Service , Sanctuary
9:00 AM	Coffee and Conversation , Kieffer Lobby, 2nd Floor
9:00 – 10:15 AM	Adult Education , <i>Let's Study the Bible</i> , North Room, 2nd Floor
9:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Nursery Care , 1st Floor
9:30 – 10:10 AM	Sunday School <i>Pre-K – 2nd Grade</i> , Liz Coffey Room, 2nd Floor <i>3rd – 5th Grade</i> , Thomas Room, 2nd Floor <i>Youth (6th – 12th Grade)</i> , Clapp Conference Room, Church Office
10:10 – 10:25 AM	Children's Music and Movement , Liz Coffey Room, 2nd Floor
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Worship , Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org Junior Church , Thomas Room, 2nd Floor <i>Children are dismissed from the sanctuary after Thought for the Day during Worship</i>
11:30 AM	Fellowship , Community Room, 1st Floor

Children, Youth *and* Family Ministry

JUNIOR CHURCH

Junior Church is a space where children ages 5-5th grade participate in creative spiritual formation activities that explore Biblical and theological themes all while creating friendships, a sense of belonging as a part of our church community, and a love for Jesus set in an intentionally fun and engaging environment. Junior church meets most Sundays, excluding the 1st Sunday of each month and other Sundays when we encourage families to join in worship together.



MAY 12: Noodle flowers—make flowers out of noodles. Talk about women in the Bible who help.

MAY 19: Big web—Children will make a huge web out of string to enjoy climbing through or under. We will discuss the way Jesus' love ties us all together. Related Scripture: John 19:16-20:10.

MAY 26: Making paper pinwheels—Talk about the noise the first disciples heard when the Holy Spirit came like a roaring wind. Related Scripture: Acts 2:1-13. This is the final Sunday of Junior Church until the fall.



YOUTH GROUP UPDATES

Sunday, May 19, 2PM: The Youth group will meet at Tree Trekkers in Frederick for a challenging journey through the treetops! Chaperones will be Wes Bowen, Jen Powell, and Barb Barry. Based on the RSVPs we had in mid-April, we have 10 spots. If you want to go, reach out to Pastor Kirstin ASAP so she can see if she can add more! The cost is \$30, and an online waiver must be signed.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We will end this year's Sunday School for children and youth on Sunday, June 2. We will start again on Sunday, September 7. Watch the bulletin for news of what we are doing throughout the summer! Please make sure to thank your teachers! We will give thanks to teachers for the leadership in faith formation during Worship on June 2.

GOD'S KIDS CLUB

Our next God's Kids Club is Tuesday, May 14 from 9AM-3PM! Pastor Kirstin has been trying to secure a field trip for us, but at the time the newsletter is due, we can't know what that will be yet! If not, we will be sure to have a hands-on activity lined up to help us enjoy the day! If the weather is nice and we're on-site, we will also plan a trip to play at Baker Park, so wear running shoes and bring a water bottle and your packed lunch! Sign up by emailing Pastor Kirstin (ksrhoads@erucc.org) or signing up on the clipboard in the upper lobby.

FAMILY CAMPING IS COMING SOON!



June 7-9 is our Family Camping Weekend. We're going to Guilford-Pinchot State Park in Pennsylvania. This location is about an hour drive. It includes multiple small sites next to one another for pitching a tent or bringing an RV, a central area with gravel ground that includes multiple picnic tables, and several fire circles. There is tree shade over the campsites but not as much near the picnic tables, so we DO want to bring popup tarps/canopies. There is electricity.

The group site is in a small loop on a one-way road that has about five other group sites. Our site is within walking distance of a shower house and a small sandy beachfront with a small playground area. We can also drive to other waterfront locations to visit the nature center, rent boats, or fish. We would also drive to other green spaces to play other sports.

We will have a Zoom planning meeting for anyone interested. This year, we plan to have cold breakfast items and supplies to pack lunches or make sandwiches at lunchtime. We'd like to invite a couple of families to pair up to cook dinners on Friday and Saturday. We would like to have folks bring snacks to share. All families will bring their own washable plates/cups/bowls.

Please join in the Zoom meeting on Sunday, April 28 at 8PM, or ask Pastor Kirstin for more information. Cost for families \$30-\$40.



Thomasa Pomeroy and Pastor Kirstin spent the weekend near Chicago learning the creative and hospitable playful themes of Messy Church!!



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL MEETING

Mark your calendars to participate in our Vacation Bible School, August 5-9, during the day. We try to keep the cost low, and it's always fun if you bring a friend! If you're interested in helping, please come to a 30-minute meeting in the back of the Community Room on Sunday, June 2, right after the 10:30AM service. We'll have chosen the curriculum by then, and we can begin assigning volunteer roles. At that meeting we will set another safe church training to include volunteers who have not done this since December 2022.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING

ERUCC will receive the STC offering on Pentecost Sunday, May 19



Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson

God calls us into community. God desires for us a big, inclusive, expansive, welcoming community. One where "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome." I call this a "big tent" community. God wants our congregations and our whole Christian movement to be a "big tent" where all can be genuinely welcomed.

The **Strengthen the Church Offering** supports congregations and initiatives that help us live into the United Church of Christ's "big tent" vision. Funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and renewal initiatives in existing congregations. Your conference and the national ministries work together to use these funds for projects that matter now and for the future of our movement.

Through this offering, we further our commitment to being a multi-racial/multi-cultural church that is accessible to all.

Will you join people across the UCC in making a gift to **Strengthen the Church**? Together, we can be the "big tent" God calls us to be.

**Learn more about the Strengthen the Church Offering
and download materials for the offering at
ucc.org/stc.**

Our Faith Our Vote—*Our Voice*



Join the 2024 Our Faith Our Vote Campaign *Your vote is your voice – don't give it up!*

The problems in our world often seem too big to confront. We see injustice daily and feel that change can't or won't happen. But our faith is infused with hope and built on a foundation of action. We serve as God's hands by serving the vulnerable, feeding the hungry, and standing in solidarity with the oppressed.

Voting is a natural extension of faithful action. Our representatives' decisions have a wide-reaching impact. We have enormous potential to make positive change. We must engage our legislators, vote, and encourage everyone in our communities to do the same.

Our faithful voice is needed.

Although it is tempting to disengage from the political process, we know we must be involved as people dedicated to creating a just world for all.

**The Maryland Presidential Primary & State Primary is Tuesday, May 14.
Make a plan to vote!**

The League of Women Voters of Frederick County has completed work with the national and state Leagues to offer nonpartisan candidate information through the online Voters' Guide at [VOTE411.org](https://votersguide.org). The League has a long tradition of publishing candidates' verbatim responses to questions important to voters.

Other resources are available through the Maryland State Board of Elections:
<https://elections.maryland.gov/elections/vote2024>



Dear Tyler,

We hope this letter finds you well. We're writing to you because you are a supporter, partner, advocate or friend of The Religious Coalition, and we're excited to tell you about a historic change we've made.

For over four decades, The Coalition has worked to prevent and alleviate the effects of poverty on the residents of Frederick County. Throughout this time, we've prided ourselves on ensuring that residents of Frederick can either retain or regain their housing stability through the evolution of the vital services our organization provides. This execution, day after day, highlights how deeply committed we are to our mission and how intentional the expansion of our services has been.

Our work would not be possible without your help. We are grateful for the ongoing support the amazing Frederick community has shown us, and invite you to continue to walk with us as we head into a future where financial security continues to be elusive for many. With households facing ever-increasing challenges, we stand ready to help face down those obstacles that block the path to get home and remain home.

As we prepare for that future, it is our job to make sure the organization is well-positioned for success. In addition to understanding the variety of challenges those suffering from poverty face so that we may better serve them, we also have to understand the challenges facing our own organization now and in the future.

Myself, our Board of Directors, and a select group within our leadership team have spent the past two years engaged in a rebranding evaluation—a wide-ranging review of the organization's perception, identity, and brand—and what we discovered was fascinating. We discovered that for some, our long-standing name can be a deterrent to accessing critically needed services.

It quickly became apparent that the perception of the Coalition, both by those who support us and those who rely on us for support, is greatly varied. Throughout the rebranding process we heard from many of you who have reinforced your decades-long dedication. We also heard understanding from each constituent we spoke with as to why a rebrand and a new name for the organization were needed.

There are several essential reasons why we needed to make this change, including creating a more meaningful sense of equality for those in need, clearing up confusion about what we do and who we are, and removing barriers that prohibited us from accessing critical funding opportunities.

Continued on the Back

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We arrived at a name that is as much a marching order as it is an ideology. We wanted something that calls back to our rich history and also allows us to expand into the future. We needed a brand that encapsulates what our mission has always been and will always be.

We're proud to introduce **Beyond Shelter Frederick** to the community!

The name Beyond Shelter will sound familiar to those of you who followed our family shelter campaign back in 2021. Beyond Shelter was our most successful capital fundraising effort in the organization's history. Taking that success and focusing our efforts on creating meaningful offramps from homelessness, we will now continue our vital work in this county.

For many in Frederick and throughout the nation, emergency shelters will never be obsolete. Unfortunately, there are enough contributing factors that cause homelessness that we'll never prevent it entirely from occurring. That said, we can certainly affect it, reduce it, and negate it with robust programming and dedicated staff who all work toward the goal of getting and keeping our clients Beyond Shelter.

The concept of Beyond Shelter is as important, if not more so, for the residents in our programs to understand. A shelter bed is not an end destination, and their journeys don't end on Degrange Street or Hayward Road. This is a detour in their lives that allows us to provide respite and recovery to get back to self-sufficiency, and to regain independence. We'll never overlook our sheltering programs; we'll only work to make them better.

To do our work effectively, we'll continue to need all of our dedicated partners and advocates to stand beside us in the fight against poverty and homelessness. Our name has changed, but the reason we exist, the mission to help those in need, and our commitment to this amazing Frederick community will not alter and will not waver.

We thank you for your continued partnership and invite you to join us as we go Beyond Shelter.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nick Brown, Executive Director
Beyond Shelter Frederick Inc.



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